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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

FROM : Alfonso Rodriguez  
Director of Training

SUBJECT : Employee Concerns About Fitness Report Evaluations

REFERENCE : Memo dtd 23 Feb 76 to DCI fm MAG; same subject

1. There is no question that Fitness Reports are and have been a source of frustration and concern for rater and ratee alike. Last January I issued a notice for all OTR employees emphasizing the importance of careful Fitness Report preparation and instructing rating officers to pay particular attention to the descriptions of each letter rating and to apply these ratings accordingly. My particular emphasis was to define "Proficient" as an acceptable level of performance fully qualifying the recipient for favorable consideration for promotion and other career development actions. A common agreement on the meaning of "Proficient" performance would help counter the trend toward "Strong" performance ratings becoming the Agency performance standard.

2. As you may know, fitness reporting is covered specifically and for at least a full day in three management training courses. The subject is covered tangentially in a fourth course (SO Seminar) through discussion of the LOI. A new three-day course, Supervisory Skills, will devote the better part of one day to LOIs and Fitness Reports. Beginning in July, the fitness reporting topic will be presented to approximately 900 employees each year. Over the past years about 2000 employees have attended these courses. I believe the Fitness Report material has reached a somewhat larger fraction of the supervisory pool than the MAG memorandum suggests. The impact of this training is difficult to assess. In the final analysis the preparation of a Fitness Report depends on a number of personal characteristics and attitudes as well as supervisor/employee relationships which are not readily dealt with in short training courses. For these reasons I conclude that the real problem is in the working environment.

3. I am in sympathy with the concerns expressed by MAG, but I do not believe a Fitness Report task force will contribute to the resolution of their concerns. As an alternative, I suggest

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that each Deputy Director state (or restate) the Fitness Report policies for his Directorate, and that these policies be reviewed by the Management Committee and the DCI. Out of this process an Agency policy could be adopted stressing the common features of fitness reporting in the four Directorates and explicitly defining and supporting important Directorate differences which materially affect the preparation of Fitness Reports. I also suggest that the MAG be asked to reexamine the Fitness Report process a year to 18 months after adopting the policy statement. If at that time the problems are still so apparent, a task force may well offer the best opportunity for upgrading the fitness reporting process. STATINTL

Alfonso Rodriguez

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